

March 13, 2012
Labor and Public Employees Committee
In Support of S.B. 352

I am Kaye A. Hill, Executive Director of The Alexis Hill Montessori School. I live in New Haven and have provided child care to families in the Greater New Haven area for over 20 years. The Alexis Hill Montessori School, Inc. provides quality education to infants and toddlers and their families. We are proud to be one of two Montessori schools in New Haven.

We offer parents an alternative to quality early child care and the opportunity to experience the Montessori pedagogy. We are very proud of that fact. We use authentic Montessori materials in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing. Our teachers have Montessori training, Bachelor Degrees in early childhood, and Master's level course work in Special Education.

Infant and toddler care is very expensive. Our school does not have NAEYC accreditation, although we are interested in Montessori accreditation in the near future. In order to receive a higher compensation from Care 4 Kids, providers such as our school must meet various eligibility criteria. It is costly because the criteria involves having staff that have higher education degrees or other credentials that meet the State's requirements. Staffing is very expensive. 80% of our families receive Care 4 Kids. Even though the cost of living continues to increase, the Care 4 Kids reimbursement rate has not gone up in many years. It has become ever increasingly difficult to provide the level of quality care at the same reimbursement level. Many providers will have to close their doors.

Collective bargaining gives providers a way to address reimbursement rates and the antiquated reimbursement process. The Executive Order is the first step towards our work being recognized for its true value. Now we need strong collective bargaining language so that children can continue to receive quality education and care.

Kaye A. Hill, New Haven